

SRCOSTEP is a competitive program designed to assist students financially during their final academic year of professional healthcare training. In return, these students agree to work for the PHS Commissioned Corps after graduation for twice the time sponsored. Upon graduation, assignments are made to the sponsoring agency/program that provided the financial support.

Eligibility: To be eligible for SRCOSTEP, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be a US citizen
2. Be under 44 years of age (or have offsetting uniformed service time)
3. Meet the medical requirements
4. Be enrolled in good standing in an accredited professional program in a commissionable discipline having at least eight months educational commitment remaining in the final year of studies
5. Be eligible to enroll in the senior or final year of professional schooling.
6. Upon graduation, agree in writing to serve on active duty as a Commissioned Officer with the PHS with the sponsoring agency for a period of twice the time sponsored
7. Be free of any obligation or responsibility that would conflict with appointment in the PHS Commissioned Corps

Note: Current selection priorities are directed toward students in dentistry, nursing, and pharmacy

Pay/Benefits: SRCOSTEPS receive the basic pay and allowances of an O-1(Ensign) Officer unless they have at least 4 years +1 day of prior military experience, then they are paid at the O-1E level. Upon graduation they are promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2) or Lieutenant (O-3) depending upon their degree. All other benefits are the same as general duty officers.

Note: Nursing students must pass the NCLEX exam prior to being promoted to O-2.

Selections Process: SRCOSTEP applications are due by December 31st for applicants whose final school year begins in the fall of the succeeding year. DCP evaluates all applications and places those which are determined to be qualified into a pool of qualified applicants. At the selection time, all qualifying applications are reviewed by the OPDIVS who select as many applicants as they have FTEs and funding for. The OPDIVS are responsible for contacting the selected applicants to explain the duties of the assignment, nature of the assignments, specific location and offer them an assignment. The applicant has three days in which to accept or decline the assignment.

Preceptor Responsibilities: Monitor students' academic standing, facilitate questions, maintain contact throughout training period until graduation, and inform DCP of any issues or concerns

Mentor Responsibilities: JOAG Mentors will be assigned to SRCOSTEPS after selections have been made. Mentors will be assigned based upon PAC category and geographical location. The mentors' primary role will be to maintain contact and establish an open dialogue with the officer and to review information with them regarding uniforms, protocols, and customs, etc.